

Research Activity Panel: FINAL Meeting Minutes
Long Marine Laboratory
University of California, Santa Cruz
Friday August 8, 1997
09:00 - 12:00

Introduction of members and guests (G. Cailliet)

Members Present:

Greg Cailliet, Moss Landing Marine Labs- Chair
Andrew DeVogelaere, MBNMS- RAP Coordinator
Lisa Ziobro, MBNMS- SAC Coordinator
Jane Caffrey, ESNERR and ESF
Michael Field, USGS
Deborah Johnston, CA DFG/ Monterey
Rikk Kvitek, CSUMB
Jennifer Nielsen, Hopkins Marine Station
Laura Ehret, Naval Postgraduate School
Mark Stephenson, CDFG/Mar. Pollution Studies Lab
Geoff Wheat, NOAA/NURP
Caroline Pomeroy, UCSC/CSUMB
Gary Sharp, CIRIOS

Guests:

Dan Costa, UCSC
Kip Evans, MBNMS
Bruce Heyer, UCSC
Michele Jacobi, MBNMS
John Robinson, MBNMS
Vicki Takacs, CSU Stanislaus
Dorris Welch, UCSC

CONSENT ITEMS:

Modifications to the agenda (G. Cailliet)

John Robinson will provide a legislation update during the "Short Information Items."

Approval of the minutes for July 1997 (G. Cailliet)

The draft minutes from the July 11, 1997 meeting were approved as presented.

PRESENTATIONS

The new Sanctuary permit system (S. Kathey)

Scott Kathey, MBNMS, presented a background of the Sanctuary permitting process and an overview of the new permit system. The most prevalent permit requests are for overflights and altering the seabed. A permit is not required for doing research within Sanctuary boundaries unless it involves Sanctuary prohibitions.

The new Sanctuary permitting system - SPITS (Sanctuary Permits Information Tracking System) - is a central database that has been set up to

standardize procedures and to provide data among sanctuary sites. Eventually, there will be the capability to link the SPITS data with GIS software. Researchers and the general public will be able to access some of the information stored in SPITS.

Scott provided a computer demonstration on how one permit request is processed by SPITS. The greater the environmental impact of a project, the greater the involvement from Sanctuary Headquarters in the permit process. If SPITS classifies a request as an "A" class (A being the least impact, C the highest impact), the permit can be issued by the local Monterey office.

Someone who does not obtain a permit for a prohibited activity faces the possibility of a \$109,000 fine per day; however, so far, the Sanctuary has not taken any legal action against violations by researchers.

Headquarters is hoping to have SPITS on-line by December 1997. Greg Cailliet suggested running a few trial tests on the program so that the RAP can provide further input, and asked members to try the system in the MBNMS office.

RAP expressed concerns about the following:

- It is inappropriate to ask for detailed budget information; no other permit agency requests it; this is confidential information that would severely impact competing consulting firms; scientists often have to obtain permits before or during seeking funding;
- The idea of having institutions requesting extensive/multiple permits for ongoing research activities is still desirable (and perhaps possible with SPITS);
- GPS datum should be specified (ie., latitude, longitude and meters from equator).

ATOC and LFA experiments (D. Costa)

Dan Costa, University of California Santa Cruz, gave a presentation on ATOC experiments, with some insights into LFA (Low Frequency Active) studies.

The ATOC project is designed to answer the basic questions - Who's out there? Where are they? Will they hear it? How do they react? The ATOC source is located fifty miles west of Half Moon Bay, at 900 meters depth, at a frequency of 130 db. The species of marine animals most likely to be affected by the source are deep divers with low frequency hearing - baleen whales and elephant seals. Therefore, the project focused on these animals, as well as sperm whales who are deep divers.

Preliminary results from aerial surveys indicated an unexpected high occurrence of sperm whales in the region. Moreover, sperm whales and humpback whales showed a small but statistically significant increase further from the sound source. This was not true for blue and fin whales. Costa does not know if the differences found in the preliminary work are biologically significant, but he is encouraged that the experimental design can detect differences.

Elephant seals with time/depth/sound recorders demonstrated no deviation in migration patterns, or diving patterns when near the sound source.

The LFA Project will use a towed array of sources rather than a single fixed source (as the ATOC project uses). The project is designed for the location of small-scale submarines and will use low frequency below 500 hz (250 db will be the highest level used). The project consists of three phases to determine if the sound impacts wildlife.

Phase 1 is located off San Nicholas Island and will target blue and humpback whales. Dan Costa expressed concern that pinnipeds in this critical breeding area were not carefully considered in environmental documents.

Phase 2 is located off Soberanes Point, in MBNMS, and will target California grey whales.

Phase 3 is located in the Hawaiian islands and will target humpback whales during breeding season.

Socioeconomic studies and the Monterey Bay Regional Studies Program (C. Pomeroy)

Caroline Pomeroy presented an overview of socioeconomic studies in the Monterey Bay region. The Monterey Bay Regional Studies Program (MBRS) is a research and teaching program that focuses on linkages between land and sea within the Monterey Bay region through integrated use of the natural and social sciences. There are currently four projects being conducted through UCSC:

1. The uncertainties, values, goals, and outcomes of steelhead management (Ann Mullen).
2. Citizen action and political culture of conservation in the Monterey Bay region (Michelle Knight).
3. Exploratory study to look at the human side of resource use and management at Big Creek - the cooperative agreement between the Big Creek manager, John Smiley, and local fishermen (Caroline Pomeroy, Julie Beck and Chris Wilcox).
4. Socio-economic analysis of the California market squid fishery (Caroline Pomeroy and Margaret Fitzsimmons).

DISCUSSION

Summary of the last SAC meeting/MBNMS Superintendent status (G. Cailliet)

Greg Cailliet provided an oral and written summary of the July 31, 1997 SAC Retreat and August 1, 1997 SAC meeting in Cambria with Stephanie Thornton and Jeff Benoit.

Sanctuary Currents format (L. Love, D. Welch, C. Pomeroy)

Dorris Welch and Caroline Pomeroy provided a quick overview of next year's Sanctuary Currents program. Presently, the three dates being considered, in order of preference, are: March 14, March 7, February 28. The theme of the symposium will be "Human Impacts on the Sanctuary." Please provide Caroline with ideas for sub-themes and speakers. The RAP also needs to start thinking about the Ricketts nominee.

SHORT INFORMATION ITEMS

Verbal items:

Central Coast Regional Monitoring Program (M. Stephenson)

Mark Stephenson and Jane Caffrey reported on the status of the Central Coast Regional Monitoring Program, which is in the very early stages and does not have extensive funding at this time. The region is from Santa Barbara through San Francisco.

Status of proposed marine legislation (J. Robinson)

John Robinson reported on proposed marine legislation. Of particular interest, Mussel Watch's \$700,000 request dropped to \$150,000.

Written items (no discussion unless there are questions):

Sound in the Sea Bibliography (A. De Vogelaere/M. Jacobi)

Michele Jacobi and Dan Costa have completed a draft bibliography on the topic. Comments on the draft are due July 8.

Great American Fish Count (M. Jacobi/A. De Vogelaere)

RAP members completed their review and a draft letter has been written.

The Sanctuary Scientific Research Plan (A. De Vogelaere/M. Jacobi)

Authors have been sent their old appendices which list research needs for different disciplines. They will determine if these sections of the Plan should be updated.

MBNMS Research Coordinator contract (A. De Vogelaere)

The deadline for contract bids has passed. WASC is processing the bids and a decision is expected by August 21.

Light in the Deep Sea Report (R. Kochevar)

In progress

Research Institution Video (K. Evans)

See NMS Research Report handout

NMS Research Reports, see handout (A. De Vogelaere/J. Roletto)

See handout

Permit Report (S. Kathey)

See handout

Legislation Update (J. Robinson)

See handout

New Business

The next RAP meeting is scheduled for September 12 at Moss Landing Marine Labs in the El Norte Building.

ADJOURN